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AUTHOR	Richardson, Brent
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ABSTRACT

This book is written for practitioners who work with or are considering working with challenging youth. It has a narrative style with limited use of psychological nomenclature so as to appeal to a variety of practitioners. The book describes the following six principles and beliefs as distinguishing effective counseling: (1) a therapeutic relationship is essential with challenging youth; (2) ongoing helper self-awareness and self-evaluation are critical for relationship building; (3) counselors must first meet youth where they are before trying to help them change; (4) a balance of support and challenge are necessary for a therapeutic relationship to grow; (5) problems and solutions are best framed in creative, constructive, caring ways; and (6) systemic, collaborative preventive approaches tend to be more fruitful than isolated approaches. Chapter One makes the distinction between challenging youth and those with a significant character disorder who may warrant a different professional response than that described in this book. It also describes the major theoretical influences used in the book. Chapters Two through Six are formatted around the six principles of what makes an effective counselor. In addition, Chapter Three provides 12 lessons to help professionals engage adolescents early in the relationship. Chapter Four describes the importance of offering support and challenge in the helping relationship. Chapter Five offers specific lessons that focus on looking beyond the behavior to avoid escalating the cycle of aggression. Chapter Six shares a variety of lessons for promoting a community-wide, collaborative approach for effective interventions with challenging youth. Chapter Seven reiterates the importance of concentrating on the six principles more than the specific techniques. (Contains 191 references.) (JDM)

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